



Title: Supporting implementation of maternal self-care intervention in South-East Asia Region

Introduction: Self-care in maternal health involves taking proactive steps to maintain physical health, emotional stability, and psychological well-being throughout pregnancy, intrapartum, and postnatal period. With a focus on the importance of self-care in maternal and child health, the following study was done to examine the status of self-care interventions for improving ante-natal, intra-partum, and post-natal care in the South East Asia Region of WHO.

Objectives: The overall goal was to review the status of self-care interventions for improving ante-natal, intrapartum, and post-natal care in countries of the South-East Asia Region of WHO. The specific objectives were:

- Selection of self-care interventions relevant to maternal care on ANC, IPC, and PNC as proposed in WHO recommendations
- Develop an assessment protocol with the proposed methodology
- Review and document the current status of implementation of self-care interventions in Maternal and Reproductive health (MRH) programs for positive pregnancy experience in SEAR Member States.
- Assessment of country readiness to implement self-care interventions in maternal care program and prepare a status report with individual country chapters.

Methodology: WHO recommendations on self-care related to ANC, IPC and PNC were reviewed and selected. Based upon the selected recommendations, an **assessment proforma**, comprising of three parts, namely, the country profile, policy and strategy related to self-care interventions and their implementation was developed to assess the status of implementation of self-care interventions in the Southeast Asia Region. The assessment proforma for each country was filled with the help of extensive desk review and subsequently sent to the respective member countries for vetting.

Readiness-criteria to assess and monitor the preparedness level to implement self-care in maternal health in the member countries on self-care in maternal health policy; level of community empowerment, engagement and participation; government initiatives including social support activities; and the availability and utilization of critical resources i.e. self-testing products and devices was developed. Finally, a **SWOT analysis** was performed to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the countries to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current state of self-care in maternal health and ways to enhance its quality and accessibility.

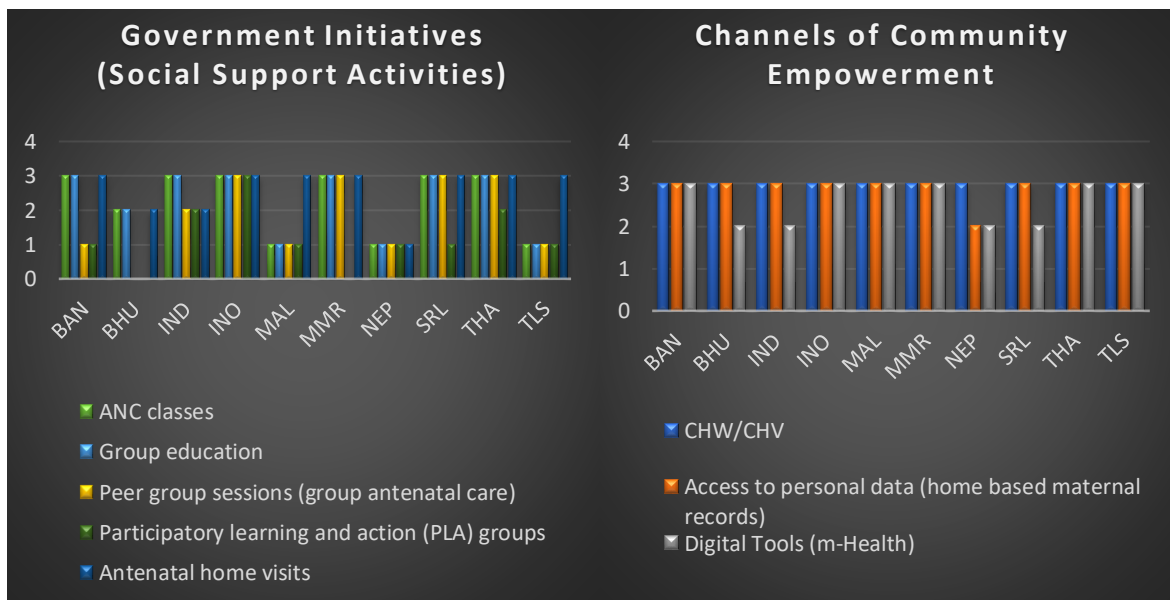
Results: The study revealed that the implementation of self-care recommendations varies widely across countries. While some countries have made significant progress and demonstrated a satisfactory level of readiness in embracing self-care, others lag behind due to various barriers such as limited healthcare infrastructure, inadequate resources, and lack of awareness and education. Community empowerment was identified as an important area which needs to be strengthened to incorporate self-care in the existing system. By equipping communities with knowledge, skills, resources, and support, individuals can be empowered to actively participate in their own care and make informed decisions that positively impact their health and well-being. The study also helped in identifying the three pillars to strengthen self-care in the community. These include the **community health workers (CHW's), client**



retained maternal records/ cards and the digital tools to provide awareness. These three pillars help in empowering the community by generating awareness, self-reliance, and confidence.



***3-Fully Present, 2- Partially present, 1- Absent, 0- Data not accessible**



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Conclusions: There is a need for incorporating and integrating the self-care interventions in the National policy for maternal health in each country of the region. There is also a need for increased efforts in promoting self-care practices and enhancing their implementation across the region. Also, investment and collaborations are required to strengthen the infrastructure, policies, and mechanisms necessary to support and enable self-care in maternal health. Governments, healthcare professionals, organizations, and individuals must work together to overcome the challenges identified and ensure that self-care becomes an integral part of maternal health. This will in turn help to improve the health outcomes, reduce healthcare costs, and empower women to take charge of their as well as their child’s health and well-being.



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